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Version # _____

APP # 700081

A. List of Restoration Activities

The BLM El Centro is proposing to implement a habitat restoration wilderness protection program to benefit desert tortoise and remote wilderness qualities which have been degraded by OHV and street legal vehicles driving off designated routes. The Northern and Eastern Colorado Plan (NECO) was completed in 2002 and included a travel management plan which designated routes as opened or closed. The vast majority of routes were designated open. At the time NECO was finalized very little funding was available to implement the route designations by posting the routes but Limited Use signs were placed along major corridors and access points. The lack of route numbering and accompanying regulations resulted in inability of law enforcement to enforce travel regulations.

The BLM will contract services to provide 4 interns for 6 months including a crew lead and archaeologist. The crew will identify restoration and restore sites in the NECO planning area. The crew will conduct archaeological surveys on the restoration sites and submit the reports to staff archaeologist for a findings summary. The interns will also sign routes (any not completed in 2008), wilderness boundaries, and map routes. In addition, they will assess areas suitable for barriers along boundaries to reduce wilderness incursions. After the restoration and closure sites are identified, the crew will work with volunteers from Desert Survivors and the Sierra Club, and BLM staff to install new or repair existing barriers. After mapping is completed BLM staff will produce and print a map for distribution to the public. The map will include open routes, land status, wilderness areas, and areas of interest. It will also contain rules and regulations and information on plants and wildlife. The BLM was authorized to use compensation funds to sign the area in FY 2009. Approximately 550 carsonite posts with route numbers, "stay on designated route", and "14-day camping limit" signs have been installed at the approximate ½ point of the project. The BLM is not proposing any changes in the number of open or closed routes. Small changes in route alignment may result from more accurate mapping of existing open routes.

B. How the Proposed Project Relates to OHV Recreation

The restoration project would benefit habitat, cultural resources, soils and OHV users by installing and maintaining an extensive sign network to identify open routes of travel established in the NECO plan. Signing the area will allow OHV users to enjoy their public lands by defining the network of open routes preventing future degradation of habitat and cultural resources. The completion of signing will allow for the production and distribution of a free route of travel map to reinforce the network of open routes and provide NECO specific information.

Restoration of closed routes will enhance the primitive qualities of the desert experience. Eliminating closed routes and off route impacts that attract OHV users will remove visual cues of past use helping the users to stay on legal routes and off sensitive habitat, cultural resources and reduce soil compaction and erosion.

C. Size of Project Site

The project area is approximately 650,000 acres in size which includes approximately 1033 miles of OHV opportunity.

D. Monitoring and Methodology

Site monitoring will include photo documentation, restoration status, OHV compliance, and law enforcement summaries. Photo documentation is recorded for all sites and consists of pre-restoration and post-restoration (i.e. at time of restoration) site photos. Additional post-restoration photos, compliance monitoring, and vegetation monitoring will be conducted on randomly-selected sites annually for three years after site restoration.

Initial monitoring includes general information such as: date, time, site reference number, monitor's name, photo reference, and site characteristics such as: width, line-of-sight, landform type, current OHV use and frequency, past management and vandalism, dominant plant species, and type of trail (e.g. hill climb, wash, etc.). Restoration monitoring records the restoration prescriptions for each site, meters restored, and person hours. The type of trail is divided into the following categories for future compliance monitoring: cross-country (level and hilly), hill climb (nearby and distant), parallel, corner cut, wash, severe denuded area, and cross trail.

Successful restoration of closed trails on a site-by-site basis, project area, and an entire sub-region, will be evaluated to assess the "health" of a restored site and the overall health of a project area. The metrics for assessing the "health" of a restored site are:

- Intensity of user compliance/non-compliance
- Visual eradication of linear features
- Preservation of critical habitat
- Landform type (potential habitat)
- Type of trail (motivation for compliance/non-compliance)
- Long-term compliance
- Preservation of wilderness values

Restoration projects will be evaluated as successful, if:

- At least 70% of restored sites remain unused by the public
- At least 80% of the signs remain intact
- At least 80% of wilderness barriers remain intact and successfully prevent wilderness incursions
- Vegetation recovery on the un-trampled sites is greater than un-restored sites and approaching natural vegetation densities and cover
- Linear features on these sites are effectively removed from the route network

Measuring the success of a closed and restored trail or trail segment will be determined through follow-up site visitation on a short-term and long-term basis to see if visual eradication of linear features has remained and no "fresh OHV tracks" are present. Where user non-compliance is high and restoration of closed trails is not occurring alternative means of effectively closing the trail will be used. This may include, but is not limited to, using alternative methods to disguise closed trails, placing barriers at the entrances of closed trails and washes, signing, increased law enforcement presence, and combinations thereof.

E. List of Reports

N/A

F. Goals, Objectives and Methodology / Peer Reviews

No studies are included in project.

G. Plan for Protection of Restored Area

There will be routine law enforcement patrols along with increased staff presence. Installation of route markers with regulation information, distribution of route of travel maps and access to online maps and other information. Barricades including but not limited to boulders, gates, post and cable, etc. will be used in strategic locations.

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Version # _____

APP # 700081

1. Project-Specific Maps

Attachments:

[NECO Route Rehab Area](#)

[NECO Signing Project North](#)

[NECO Signing Project South](#)

2. Project-Specific Photos

Attachments:

[Landscape](#)

[Off-route Travel](#)

[Open Route](#)

Project Cost Estimate for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2008/2009
 Agency: BLM - El Centro Field Office
 Application: Restoration - NECO

6/2/2009

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:		Version # _____	APP # _____
APPLICANT NAME :	BLM - El Centro Field Office		
PROJECT TITLE :	Restoration - NECO	PROJECT NUMBER (Division use only) :	
PROJECT TYPE :	<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Development</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Education & Safety</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Ground Operations</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Planning</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restoration</div> </div>		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION :	<p>The BLM El Centro is proposing to implement a habitat restoration wilderness protection program to benefit desert tortoise and remote wilderness qualities which have been degraded by OHV and street legal vehicles driving off designated routes. The Northern and Eastern Colorado Plan (NECO) was completed in 2002 and included a travel management plan which designated routes as opened or closed. The vast majority of routes were designated open. At the time NECO was finalized very little funding was available to implement the route designations by posting the routes but Limited Use signs were placed along major corridors and access points. The lack of route numbering and accompanying regulations resulted in inability of law enforcement to enforce travel regulations.</p> <p>The BLM will contract services to provide 4 interns for 6 months including a crew lead and archaeologist. The crew will identify restoration and restore sites in the NECO planning area. The crew will conduct archaeological surveys on the restoration sites and submit the reports to staff archaeologist for a findings summary. The interns will also sign routes (any not completed in 2008), wilderness boundaries, and map routes. In addition, they will assess areas suitable for barriers along boundaries to reduce wilderness incursions. After the restoration and closure sites are identified, the crew will work with volunteers from Desert Survivors and the Sierra Club, and BLM staff to install new or repair existing barriers. After mapping is completed BLM staff will produce and print a map for distribution to the public. The map will include open routes, land status, wilderness areas, and areas of interest. It will also contain rules and regulations and information on plants and wildlife. The BLM was authorized to use compensation funds to sign the area in FY 2009. Approximately 550 carsonite posts with route numbers, "stay on designated route", and "14-day camping limit" signs have been installed at the approximate ½ point of the project. The BLM is not proposing any changes in the number of open or closed routes. Small changes in route alignment may result from more accurate mapping of existing open routes.</p>		

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
DIRECT EXPENSES							
Program Expenses							
1	Staff						
	Archeologist	5.000	300.000	DAY	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
	Archeologist	5.000	275.000	DAY	0.00	1,375.00	1,375.00
	Botanist	2.000	340.000	DAY	0.00	680.00	680.00
	Recreation Planner	5.000	300.000	DAY	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
	Other-Biologist	10.000	275.000	DAY	0.00	2,750.00	2,750.00

Project Cost Estimate for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2008/2009
Agency: BLM - El Centro Field Office
Application: Restoration - NECO

6/2/2009

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Other-Wilderness Coord.	10.000	300.000	DAY	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
	Other-Law Enforcement	30.000	275.000	DAY	0.00	8,250.00	8,250.00
	Other-Volunteers	100.000	21.970	HRS	0.00	2,197.00	2,197.00
	Other-Res. Branch Chief	3.000	340.000	DAY	0.00	1,020.00	1,020.00
	Other-SCA Wild Corp	18.000	890.000	DAY	0.00	16,020.00	16,020.00
	Other-Force Acct/Maint.	5.000	350.000	DAY	0.00	1,750.00	1,750.00
	Other-Force Acct/Maint..	5.000	275.000	DAY	0.00	1,375.00	1,375.00
	Other-Force Acct/Maint.	5.000	280.000		0.00	1,400.00	1,400.00
	Total for Staff				0.00	42,817.00	42,817.00
2	Contracts						
	Restoration Crew	6.000	12500.000	MOS	75,000.00	0.00	75,000.00
3	Materials / Supplies						
	Route Markers	1000.000	27.000	EA	27,000.00	0.00	27,000.00
	Steel Post	100.000	25.000	EA	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
	Signs	100.000	35.000	EA	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00
	Other-Misc. Supplies (nuts/bolts, etc.)	1.000	2500.000	MISC	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
	Other-GPS Cameras	4.000	500.000	EA	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
	Other-Construction Materials, etc. Notes : Purchase miscellaneous construction materials such as, but not limited to, steel and welding supplies.	1.000	8000.000	MISC	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00
	Other-Restoration Materials, etc Notes : Purchase restoration materials such as, but not limited to, permeon and fencing supplies.	1.000	10000.000	MISC	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
	Other-Rakes, Shovels, etc.	1.000	2000.000	MISC	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00

Project Cost Estimate for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2008/2009
Agency: BLM - El Centro Field Office
Application: Restoration - NECO

6/2/2009

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Notes : Purchase miscellaneous supplies such as, but not limited to, rakes, shovels, and hardware.						
	Total for Materials / Supplies				57,500.00	0.00	57,500.00
4	Equipment Use Expenses						
	4x4 Vehicle	6.000	1000.000	MOS	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
	4x4 Vehicle	6.000	1000.000	MOS	0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
	Total for Equipment Use Expenses				0.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
5	Equipment Purchases						
6	Others						
	Other-Compensation Funds	1.000	20000.000	EA	0.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
	Printing Notes : We want to print 2500 NECO route of travel maps to provide to the public, free of charge. Currently, we are in the process of designing the map.	2500.000	2.000	EA	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
	Total for Others				5,000.00	20,000.00	25,000.00
7	Administrative Costs						
	Total Program Expenses				137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00
	TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES				137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES				137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00

Project Cost Summary for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2008/2009
Agency: BLM - El Centro Field Office
Application: Restoration - NECO

6/2/2009

	Line Item	Grant Request	Match	Total	Narrative
DIRECT EXPENSES					
Program Expenses					
1	Staff	0.00	42,817.00	42,817.00	This is staff working on the Project along with other contractors and volunteers.
2	Contracts	75,000.00	0.00	75,000.00	Requesting the amount shown here to contract out for a restoration crew.
3	Materials / Supplies	57,500.00	0.00	57,500.00	These are the expenses for the signing supplies needed.
4	Equipment Use Expenses	0.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	These would be the vehicles used by the contracted help.
5	Equipment Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	
6	Others	5,000.00	20,000.00	25,000.00	This is a money request for printing, construction and restoration materials. Compensation funds coming in from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for Desert Tortoise.
7	Administrative Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Program Expenses		137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00	
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES		137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		137,500.00	74,817.00	212,317.00	

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Version # _____

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ITEM 1 and ITEM 2

ITEM 1

- a. ITEM 1 - Has a CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) been filed for the Project? ☐ Yes ☒ No
(Please select Yes or No)

ITEM 2

- b. ITEM 2 - Are the proposed activities a "Project" under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378? ☒ Yes ☐ No
(Please select Yes or No)
- c. The Application is requesting funds solely for personnel and support to enforce OHV laws and ensure public safety. These activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No
- d. Other. Explain why proposed activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. DO NOT complete ITEMS 3 – 9

ITEM 3 - Impact of this Project on Wetlands

There are no wetlands or navigable waters in the project area. Completion of this project will benefit the desert tortoise which is the only federally listed species in the project area. The tortoise will benefit by improved habitat conditions resulting from restoration efforts and vehicles staying on open OHV routes. A number of State listed and BLM Sensitive Species occur in the project area including Gila Woodpecker, Nelson's Bighorn Sheep, Pallid bat, Yuma Myotis, and California leaf-nosed bats.

ITEM 4 - Cumulative Impacts of this Project

We do not expect significant impacts from activities proposed in this project. The type and frequency of recreation will be unchanged with the exception of decreased use of closed routes and less cross country travel. The full range of environmental impacts has been evaluated during the NEPA process. All proposed activities are expected to result in a net benefit for the area's natural resources.

ITEM 5 - Soil Impacts

We expect beneficial effects from route restoration and decreased off route of travel. High erosion potential areas are a priority for restoration activities. Much of the project area has stable soils and flat topography. The purpose of the project is to improve habitat conditions including soil health and visual resources. Installation of carsonsite posts has not been shown to contribute to soil erosion.

ITEM 6 - Damage to Scenic Resources

There are no state scenic highways within the project area.

ITEM 7 - Hazardous Materials

Is the proposed Project Area located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (hazardous materials)? (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe the location of the hazard relative to the Project site, the level of hazard and the measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the hazards.

ITEM 8 - Potential for Adverse Impacts to Historical or Cultural Resources

Would the proposed Project have potential for any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources? (Please select Yes or No)

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe the potential impacts and for any substantially adverse changes in the significance of historical or cultural resources and measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the impacts.

ITEM 9 - Indirect Significant Impacts

The actions proposed in the project will lead to much higher compliance on the designated routes, but we do not expect a significant change in the number of users or the general area of use. We are not implementing any new closures.

CEQA/NEPA Attachment

Attachments:

[NECO/WECO Restoration EA](#)
[Wilderness Restoration EA](#)
[NECO ROD](#)

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1. Project Cost Estimate - Q 1. (Auto populates from Cost Estimate)

1. As calculated on the Project Cost Estimate, the percentage of the Project costs covered by the Applicant is: 3

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ 76% or more (10 points)
☐ 51% - 75% (5 points)
☒ 26% - 50% (3 points)
☐ 25% (Match minimum) (No points)

2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Q 2.

2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Failure to fund the Project will result in adverse impacts to: 16

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☐ Domestic water supply (4 points)
☒ Archeological and historical resources identified in the California Register of Historical Resources or the Federal Register of Historic Places (3 points)
☐ Stream or other watercourse (3 points)
☒ Soils - Site actively eroding (2 points)
☒ Sensitive areas (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of sensitive habitats [3]
☒ Threatened and Endangered (T&E) listed species (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of T&E species [1]
☒ Other special-status species- Number of special-status species (1 point each, up to a maximum of 3) Enter number of special-status species [3]

Describe the type and severity of impacts that might occur relative to the checked item(s):

Off-route travel has resulted in significant damage to Cultural Resources in the past including Geoglyphs, Village Sites, Cremation Sites and Ceremonial Sites.

Travelling off-route results in degradation to desert crust and biotic soils which leads to accelerated erosion.

Several routes that are designated open have been washed out during the infrequent large rainfall events throughout the desert. A small segment of the OHV community contributes to route proliferation when they seek a new route around impassible areas, which leads to vehicle incursions into the Wilderness and other degradation of ACEC's and sensitive areas for the Desert Bighorn Sheep and Desert Tortoise.

Much of this project occurs in critical habitat for the desert tortoise and other BLM sensitive and State listed species such as the Loggerhead Shrike, Crissal Thrasher and Le Conte's Thrasher.

3. Reason for Project - Q 3.

3. Reason for the Project 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ Protect special-status species or cultural site (4 points)
☒ Restore natural resource system damaged by OHV activity (4 points)
☐ OHV activity in a closed area (3 points)
☐ Alternative measures attempted, but failed (2 points)
☐ Management decision (1 point)
☐ Scientific and cultural studies (1 point)
☐ Planning efforts associated with Restoration (1 point)

Reference Document

NECO Management Plan and the California Desert Conservation Area Plan as amended.

4. Measures to Ensure Success - Q 4.

4. Measures to ensure success –The Project makes use of the following elements to ensure successful implementation 12

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 2 points each (Please select applicable values)

- ☒ Site monitoring to prevent additional damage
- ☒ Construction of barriers and other traffic control devices
- ☒ Use of native plants and materials
- ☒ Incorporation of universally recognized 'Best Management Practices'
- ☒ Educational signage
- ☒ Identification of alternate OHV routes to ensure that OHV activities will not reoccur in restored area

Explain each item checked above:

Site monitoring will occur from routine law enforcement patrols as well as tasks performed from non-law enforcement for normal operational duties as assigned.

Construction of barriers will occur upon documentation of site incursions (mainly wilderness incursions).

Use of native plants will be utilized during closed route rehabilitation.

Educational signing will occur on all of the designated "open" routes of travel.

Alternative routes of travel will be identified by sign installation at or near the junctions of closed and designated open routes of travel.

The BLM follows a set of Best Management Practices (BMP's) that minimize potential adverse effects to species of concern for BLM and the California Department of Fish and Game. These practices are made available to all partners, permittee, and contractors. BLM lands except those specifically designated as OHV open areas, all vehicle traffic must remain on existing OHV routes. A copy of the "BMP's" are available at the BLM El Centro Field Office.

5. Publicly Reviewed Plan - Q 5.

5. Is there a publicly reviewed and adopted plan (e.g., wilderness designation, land management plans, route designation decisions) that supports the need for the Restoration Project? 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ No (No points) ☒ Yes (5 points)

Identify plan

Northern/Eastern Colorado Desert Management Plan

Wilderness Act (which includes all or part of 5 wilderness areas within the project area)

ACEC's

CDCA

Designated Critical Habitat for Desert Tortoise

6. Primary Funding Source - Q 6.

6. Primary funding source for future operational costs associated with the Project will be: 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ Applicant's operational budget (5 points)
☐ Volunteer support and/or donations (3 points)
☐ Other Grant funding (2 points)
☐ OHV Trust Funds (No points)

If 'Operational budget' is checked, list reference document(s):

We anticipate continuing use of appropriated dollars to monitor and enforce regulation of the project area.

7. Public Input - Q 7.

7. The Project was developed with public input employing the following 2

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 1 point each, up to a maximum of 2 points (Please select applicable values)

- ☐ Meeting(s) with the general public to discuss Project (1 point)
☒ Conference call(s) with interested parties (1 point)
☒ Meeting(s) with stakeholders (1 point)

Explain each statement that was checked

Phone calls with non-government organizations like the Desert Survivors, California Wilderness Coalition, and the Sierra Club. They will volunteer their services for monitoring, signing and barricade installation.

This is an important area to California Department of Fish and Game. The Department is working to increase sheep and deer populations in the area. In addition, the Imperial County Fish and Game Commission and Desert Wildlife Unlimited continue to support installation of permanent wildlife water sources as outlined in the NECO Management Plan.

8. Utilization of Partnerships - Q 8.

8. The Project will utilize partnerships to successfully accomplish the Project. The number of partner organizations that will participate in the Project are 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ 4 or more (4 points) ☐ 2 to 3 (2 points)
☐ 1 (1 point) ☐ None (No points)

List partner organization(s):

California Wilderness Coalition
Desert Survivors
Sierra Club
Student Conservation Association

9. Scientific and Cultural Studies - Q 9.

9. Scientific and cultural studies will

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☐ Determine appropriate Restoration techniques (2 points)
☐ Examine potential effects of OHV Recreation on natural or cultural resources (2 points)
☐ Examine methods to ensure success of Restoration efforts (1 point)
☐ Lead to direct management action (1 point)

Explain each item checked above

10. Underlying Problem - Q 10.

10. The underlying problem that resulted in the need for the Restoration Project has been effectively addressed and resolved 3

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ No (No points) ☒ Yes (3 points)

Explain 'Yes' answer

The El Centro Field Office was directed by the California State Office to increase the Law Enforcement staff to a level which can provide adequate coverage. Since that time, Law Enforcement staff has increased from 6 to 12 staff members and has resulted in a corresponding increase in presence throughout the resource area. In addition, over 700 route markers have been installed 2008/2009 from a separate funding source. The increase in regulatory posting has enabled law enforcement to issue more citations which are better able to stand in court.

11. Size of sensitive habitats - Q 11.

11. Size of sensitive habitats (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) within the Project Area which will be restored 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ Greater than 10 acres (5 points)
- ☐ 1 – 10 acres (3 points)
- ☐ Less than 1 acre (1 points)
- ☐ No sensitive habitat within Project Area (No points)